

Amendments to the Claims:

(Currently amended) 1. A business-entity data-exchange system for providing the transfer of and the controlled access to a version of an object and other associated information of a file by a plurality of users from different business entities, said business entities being business partners or potential business partners producing products and component parts from different companies throughout a product supply chain comprising:

a database for storing an object and associated information, the object comprising distinguishable groups of data, each group of data having associated access criteria for access to the groups of data;

said data comprising multiple elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross-reference data, related information data, earlier version data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

said access criteria comprising criteria selected from the group consisting of trade secret criteria, confidentiality among business partners criteria, established business relationship criteria, confidential information criteria, predetermined privileges set by the owner of the information criteria, host status, guest status, original equipment manufacturer status, contract equipment manufacturer status, and user ID;

an application server configured with memory and operation software code to control access to data stored in the database and to set up and send a document file having a

representation of an object and associated documents that are stored in the database ;

~~a memory for storing software code for controlling the operation of said application server;~~

access data application code stored in the memory and executable by the application server, said access data application code being responsive to ~~the~~ said access criteria associated with ~~the~~ said groups of data contained within a version of an object and to predetermined modification privileges for allowing controlled access to modify individual groups of data contained within the version of the object by an individual user;

and wherein the version of the object that may be viewed or modified by said individual user, herein termed a requested object, is a redacted version where the data that is redacted varies according to said individual user's predetermined access or modification privileges; and in which said predetermined access or modification privileges of said individual user vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system.

(Currently amended) 2. A system according to Claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ said access data application code ~~enables~~ controls the ability of said individual user to read the contents of ~~the~~ said ~~transferred redacted version of the~~ requested object that was sent by the application server according to access privileges associated with said individual user.

(Currently amended) 3. A system according to Claim 2, wherein the access data application code ~~includes the ability~~ enables said individual user to modify the contents of ~~the redacted version of the~~ said requested object; and store the modified contents in said memory of said application server.

(Currently amended) 4. A system according to Claim 3, wherein the access data application code enables said individual user ~~ability to modify~~ includes the ability to delete information contained in ~~the redacted version of the~~ said requested object; and store said modified requested object in said memory of said application server.

(Currently amended) 5. A system according to Claim 3, wherein the access data application code enables said individual user ~~ability to modify includes the ability to~~ add data to ~~the redacted version of the~~ said requested object; and store said modified requested object in said memory of said application server.

(Currently amended) 6. A system according to Claim 1 wherein ~~the~~ said individual user's access to the redacted version of the object is determined by a business relationship to produce products and defined by the host according to the need of information in ~~the~~ a product supply chain, and wherein ~~the transferred redacted version of the~~ said requested object is configured to reveal limited information according to a guest user's predetermined access privileges.

(Currently amended) 7. A method of controlling access to business-entity data-exchange objects stored in electronic form, comprising:

storing an object in a database, the object comprising distinguishable groups of data, each group of data having associated access criteria for access to the groups of data;

said data comprising multiple elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross-reference data, related information data, earlier version data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

said access criteria comprising criteria selected from the group consisting of trade secret criteria, confidentiality among business partners criteria, established business relationship criteria, confidential information criteria, predetermined privileges set by the owner of the information criteria, host status, guest status, original equipment manufacturer status, contract equipment manufacturer status, and user ID;

controlling the access to ~~the~~ said database using an application server configured to set up a redacted version of an object, herein termed a requested object, according to access criteria established for a user;

storing software code for controlling the operation of said application server's CPU in said application server's memory;

transferring a said redacted version of an requested object to a user in the form of a document file having the ~~said redacted version of the~~ requested object and any associated documents requested by a user contained therein; and

allowing controlled access to individual groups of data contained within ~~the said transferred version of the object by an individual user~~ requested object according to an individual user's predetermined privileges in response to ~~the~~ said access criteria associated with ~~the~~ said groups of data contained within ~~the version of the~~ said redacted object ~~transferred~~;

in which said predetermined privileges of said individual user vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;

and wherein said business entities are from different companies.

(Currently amended) 8. A method according to Claim 7 further comprising:

receiving an object request by a ~~requestor~~ individual user;

verifying the ~~requestor's~~ individual user's user privilege access criteria; and

transmitting a ~~redacted version of an~~ requested object configured to reveal information contained with in ~~the redacted version of the~~ said requested object according to the ~~requestor's~~ individual user's user privilege access criteria.

(Previously presented) 9. A method according to Claim 7, further comprising establishing a version of an object by loading information into the version of the object into separate groups having separate access privilege criteria.

(Canceled)10.

(Currently amended) 11. A method according to Claim 8, wherein verifying the ~~requestor's~~ individual user's user privilege access criteria includes extracting the ~~requestor's~~ individual user's user identification from the object request, verifying the ~~requestor's~~ individual user's user identification and identifying the groups of data within the ~~version of the requested~~ object to which the ~~requestor~~ individual user has access.

(Currently amended) 12. A method according to Claim 7, further comprising transmitting a redacted version of an object by sending ~~a an electronic~~ requested object to the individual user that contains the groups of information to which the individual user has access to and that excludes groups of information associated with an object that is redacted so that the individual user has limited access.

(Currently amended) 13. A business-entity data-exchange computer program product for use with a computer system, a central processing unit and means coupled to the central processing unit for storing a database to automatically manage objects for viewing and marking an object having varying formats without the use of any originating application of a file to view the object, comprising:

computer readable code means for establishing an object in a storage location;
said object containing data comprising one or more elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component

part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross-reference data, related information data, earlier version data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

computer readable code means for identifying a user to have limited access to information associated with the object;

computer readable code means for establishing privilege access criteria that define the scope of access of a version of the object for the user;

computer readable code means for receiving an object request by a requestor;

computer readable code means for verifying the requestor's user privilege access criteria;

and

computer readable code means for transmitting a redacted version of the requested object in the form of a redacted document that masks information according to the requestor's user privilege access criteria;

in which said user privilege access criteria vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;

and wherein said business entities are from different companies.

(Currently amended) 14. A business-entity data-exchange computer program device comprising:

a computer program storage device readable by a digital processing apparatus;

a program stored on the program storage device and including instructions executable by the digital processing apparatus for controlling the apparatus to perform a method for viewing and modifying an object to allow a user to view and modify a redacted version of an object stored in a file, comprising:

establishing an object in a storage location;

said object containing data comprising one or more elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross-reference data, related information data, earlier version data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

identifying a user to have access to the object;

establishing privilege access criteria that define the scope of access of a version of the object for the user;

receiving a object request by a requestor;

verifying the requestor's user privilege access criteria; and

transmitting a redacted version of a requested object in the form of a document file containing the redacted version of the requested object that is redacted according to the requestor's user privilege access criteria;

in which said requestor user privilege access criteria vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual requestor is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;

and wherein said business entities are from different companies.

(Currently amended) 15. In a business entity data exchange computer server having a data base for storing data pertaining to product information, a method of securely transferring data between a source and an access destination comprising:

establishing an object in a storage location;

said object containing data comprising one or more elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross-reference data, related information data, earlier version data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

identifying a user to have limited access to the object;

establishing privilege access criteria that define the scope of access of a version of the object for the user;

receiving a an object request by an individual user;

verifying the individual user's privilege access criteria;

setting up a redacted version of an object and associated documents according to user access privileges for transmission to the individual user; and

transmitting the redacted version of the requested object, wherein the access criteria defines the information in which an individual user has privileges of access to the redacted version of the requested object;

and in which said privilege access criteria of said individual user vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;

and wherein said business entities are from different companies.

(Currently amended) 16. In an business-entity data-exchange application server having access to a data base for storing objects and associated documents, a method of securely transferring a version of an object and associated documents from the application server to a user system via a network comprising:

establishing privilege access criteria that define the scope of access permitted to a user of a version of an object that may be set up and sent to an individual user;

wherein said individual users may be from different business entities, said business entities being business partners or potential business partners producing products and component parts throughout a product supply chain;

said object containing data comprising one or more elements selected from the group consisting of product data, supply chain data, component part data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, design data, development data, access privilege data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business documents data, business agreements data, OEM products and components data, CEM products and components data, bill of material data, change order data, component part object data, component part linking data, component part identification data, component part number data, part attribute data, part affiliation data, part product context data, specifications drawing data, color data, size data, type data, price data, quantity data, find number data, cross-reference data, related information data, earlier version data, history of change data, text document data, graphics drawing data, other attribute data, redacted data, discovery privilege data, cost data, component parts specifications data, product specifications data, quantity received data, quantity needed data, availability data, supplier type data, geographical information, and purchase order data;

receiving a object request by an individual user via a network for access to a version of an object to which the individual user has access privileges;

verifying the individual user's user privilege access criteria;

setting up a version of an object and associated documents according to user access privileges for transmission to the individual user; and

transmitting via the network a redacted version of the requested object in the form of a redacted document file that includes a redacted version of the requested object and a redacted version of associated documents;

and in which said privilege access criteria of said individual user vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;
and wherein said business entities are from different companies.

(New) 17. A business-entity data-exchange system for providing the transfer of and the controlled access to a version of an object and other associated information of a file by a plurality of users from different business entities, said business entities being business partners or potential business partners producing products and component parts from different companies throughout a product supply chain comprising:

a database for storing an object and associated information, the object comprising distinguishable groups of data, each group of data having associated access criteria for access to the groups of data;

said data comprising multiple elements selected from the group consisting of supply chain data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business agreements data, redacted data, and discovery privilege data;

said access criteria comprising criteria selected from the group consisting of trade secret criteria, confidentiality among business partners criteria, established business relationship criteria, confidential information criteria, predetermined privileges set by the owner of the information criteria, host status, guest status, original equipment manufacturer status, contract equipment manufacturer status, and user ID;

an application server configured with memory and operation software code to control access to data stored in the database and to set up and send a document file having a representation of an object and associated documents that are stored in the database ;

access data application code stored in the memory and executable by the application server, said access data application code being responsive to said access criteria associated with said groups of data contained within a version of an object and to predetermined modification privileges for allowing controlled access to modify individual groups of data contained within the version of the object by an individual user;

and wherein the version of the object that may be viewed or modified by said individual user, herein termed a requested object, is a redacted version where the data that is redacted varies according to said individual user's predetermined access or modification privileges; and in which said predetermined access or modification privileges of said individual user vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system.

(New) 18. A method of controlling access to business-entity data-exchange objects stored in electronic form, comprising:

- storing an object in a database, the object comprising distinguishable groups of data, each group of data having associated access criteria for access to the groups of data;

- said data comprising multiple elements selected from the group consisting of supply chain data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business agreements data, redacted data, and discovery privilege data;

- said access criteria comprising criteria selected from the group consisting of trade secret criteria, confidentiality among business partners criteria, established business relationship criteria, confidential information criteria, predetermined privileges set by the owner of the information criteria, host status, guest status, original equipment manufacturer status, contract equipment manufacturer status, and user ID;

- controlling the access to said database using an application server configured to set up a redacted version of an object, herein termed a requested object, according to access criteria established for a user;

- storing software code for controlling the operation of said application server's CPU in said application server's memory;

- transferring said requested object to a user in the form of a document file having said requested object and any associated documents requested by a user contained therein; and

- allowing controlled access to individual groups of data contained within said requested object according to an individual user's predetermined privileges in response to said access criteria associated with said groups of data contained within said redacted object;

in which said predetermined privileges of said individual user vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;
and wherein said business entities are from different companies.

(New) 19. A business-entity data-exchange computer program product for use with a computer system, a central processing unit and means coupled to the central processing unit for storing a database to automatically manage objects for viewing and marking an object having varying formats without the use of any originating application of a file to view the object, comprising:

- computer readable code means for establishing an object in a storage location;
- said object containing data comprising one or more elements selected from the group consisting of supply chain data, subcontracting company data, partnership data, trade secret data, confidential information data, business relationship data, business agreements data, redacted data, and discovery privilege data;

- computer readable code means for identifying a user to have limited access to information associated with the object;

- computer readable code means for establishing privilege access criteria that define the scope of access of a version of the object for the user;

- computer readable code means for receiving an object request by a requestor;

- computer readable code means for verifying the requestor's user privilege access criteria;

and

- computer readable code means for transmitting a redacted version of the requested object in the form of a redacted document that masks information according to the requestor's user privilege access criteria;

in which said user privilege access criteria vary according to the status of the business partnership between the business entity that said individual user is affiliated with, and the business entity that controls said data exchange system;

and wherein said business entities are from different companies.